

**(Washington, DC)** Today, Congressman Alcee L. Hastings (D-Miramar) introduced the *Veterans Pensions Protection Act*

, legislation that will protect veterans from losing their pension benefits because they received payments to cover expenses incurred after an accident, theft, loss or casualty loss.

**(Please find attached a copy of the legislation)**

"My legislation will fix a loophole under existing law to ensure that pensions are issued to veterans who legitimately meet the income criteria and rely on such benefits to survive," said Hastings.

Currently, if a veteran is seriously injured in an accident or the victim of a theft and receives insurance compensation to cover his or her medical expenses or the cost of replacement of the stolen items, he or she will likely lose their pension.

"Such a tragedy happened to one of my constituents, a disabled veteran with muscular dystrophy who was hit by a truck when crossing the street in his wheelchair. His pension was abruptly cut off after he received an insurance settlement payment to cover medical expenses for himself and his service dog, and material expenses to replace his wheelchair. As a result, he fell below the poverty line, could not cover his daily expenses and mortgage payments, and almost lost his home," Hastings further noted.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) considers a variety of sources of revenue to determine a veteran's annual income. If such income exceeds the income limit set by the VA, the veteran does not qualify for a pension or loses his or her benefits. The VA considers any reimbursement that compensates a veteran for their expenses due to accidents, theft or loss as income. The *Veterans Pensions Protection Act* will exempt these reimbursements from being included into the determination of a veteran's income.

"Current law effectively punishes veterans when they suffer from such an accident, theft or loss. There is clearly something wrong with a law that cancels veterans' pensions following the award of an insurance payment, which was only intended to cover exceptional medical expenses. My legislation will ensure the continuity of our veterans' pensions and that no veteran will have their benefits unfairly depreciated or cancelled. At a time when our nation's servicemen and women are fighting two wars abroad, we have a duty to our past, present, and

future veterans to provide them with the very best services and benefits. We owe our veterans an enormous debt, and cannot thank them enough for their service.”

**Joining Hastings as original co-sponsors of the legislation include:** Representatives Corrine Brown, Ted Deutch, Shelley Berkley, Bob Filner, Raul Grijalva, Vern Buchanan, Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Al Green, Elijah Cummings, Barney Frank, James McGovern, Judy Chu, Dana Rohrabacher, Laura Richardson, Steve Israel, Larry Kissel, John Mica, Betty Sutton, Ben Ray Luján, Silvestre Reyes, David McKinley, Grace Napolitano, Steve Cohen, David Cicilline, Mike Michaud, Brad Sherman, Kathy Castor, Joe Courtney, Sheila Jackson Lee, Jeff Fortenberry, Howard Berman, Tim Bishop, Karen Bass, and Tim Walz.

*Congressman Alcee L. Hastings serves as Senior Member of the House Rules Committee, Ranking Democratic Member of the U.S. Helsinki Commission, and Democratic Chairman of the Florida Delegation.*

###

---

 [Hastings Veterans Pensions Protection Act 112th.pdf](#)